

March 1, 1984

LB 994

Senator Newell, i.e. that property taxes are a problem and that state aid is the way to address that problem, that the funding of education should be more from sales and income and less from property tax and all those wonderful things. We have got a bill to do that and I suggested to Senator Newell that he use that bill to put his saddle on and try to ride across the finish line. Now let me tell you a little bit of a story, and by the way, this is a true story and I want to make it clear at the outset that I have got nothing against any profession, but I think it says something about the priorities we have in this country. Toward the end of last year, toward the end of 1983 I happened to be in Washington, D.C. and one night I was on the Metro late in the evening or rather early in the evening, I guess about seven-thirty or so, and there was a young black man on the Metro that I sat down next to and is my habit I got to visiting with the people I am around and I started visiting with him and he was on his way to a night class at Georgetown University working his way toward a masters in mathematics. I asked him if he was going to be a teacher and he laughed and said, "Why heavens no, I can't afford to be a teacher." I said, "What are you going to do when you get your degree?" And he said, "I am going to stay with the same job I have got now probably." And I said, "What is that?" And he said, "I am a bus driver." And so I said, "Well, what do you get paid as a bus driver?" And he said, "Our starting salary in Washington, D.C. as a city bus driver is \$30,000 a year." Now I have had a lot of people tell me they wouldn't be a bus driver in Washington, D.C. for that figure and that is probably true and please understand I have got nothing against bus drivers. So I asked him what the starting salary was for teachers in Washington, D.C. and he said \$13,500. My point is simply this. As a country, as a society, if our priority is such that a bus driver shall be paid two and a half times more than a school teacher, then I think we have got some problems as it relates to why we teach and train our young people, how we prepare ourselves to move into the information age, how we prepare ourselves to move into the Twenty-First Century, and there are those people that are going to go into the Twenty-First Century screaming and dragging their feet. I believe, I believe it is extremely